



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
ACQUISITION LOGISTICS AND TECHNOLOGY
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17 November 2004

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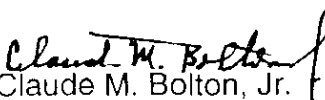
MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Functional Independence of Contracting Officers

Ongoing Army reorganization initiatives have caused changes in the rating chains for many people. Within the acquisition community, it is critical to understand the importance of Contracting Officers and Contract Specialists retaining their functional independence. This allows them to provide *unbiased contracting advice based on sound business principles*. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Policy and Procurement (DASA(P&P)), the Principal Assistants Responsible for Contracting, and contracting professionals Army-wide are committed to effectively using their skills and experience to support their customers in our dynamic acquisition environment.

On June 2, 1993, then Under Secretary of Defense, John M. Deutch, issued the memorandum at Enclosure 1 stating the importance of contracting officers retaining a degree of independence that allows them to provide unbiased advice. This position is still relevant. Contracting Officers and Contract Specialists performance evaluations will continue to be done within their own career program channels. The only exception will be the performance evaluation of the Chief of the Contracting Office, which may be, when so designated, the Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting. This performance evaluation process is consistent with ensuring the integrity of the procurement process while at the same time providing support to program managers and others in the requiring community. *This position is in concert with the guidance in my memorandum, "The Role of Contracting Personnel", dated December 29, 2003. (Enclosure 2).*

The Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Office of the Secretary of Defense, plans to update the guidance contained in the June 2, 1993 memorandum. Until this updated guidance is issued the previous policies are still in effect. It is, therefore, essential that all members of the acquisition community support and comply with the requirement for the functional independence of our contracting professionals.


Claude M. Bolton, Jr.

Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Acquisition, Logistics and Technology)

Enclosures

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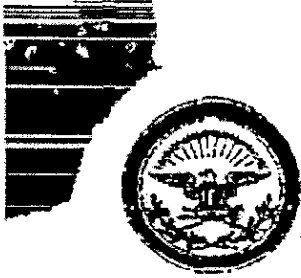
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THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, DC 21301

June 2, 1993

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
ATTENTION: SERVICE ACQUISITION EXECUTIVES
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY

SUBJECT: Functional Independence of Contracting Officers

Contracting officers provide vital support to program offices and to other requiring activities in the acquisition process. A good working relationship among all personnel involved in that process is critical for the efficient and effective meeting of our defense needs.

In particular, expertise in the contracting field requires a knowledge of a large number of laws, regulations, directives and instructions, and the skill and experience to operate successfully a contractual business environment. The proper exercise of this expertise requires the ability to act independently without improper influence on business decisions. Such independence does not imply a lack of support for the rest of the acquisition matrix. On the contrary, the best support that can be given by the contracting staff is the competent exercise of contracting skills involving sound business judgment.

To retain a degree of independence that allows unbiased advice based on the principles of sound business, contracting officers' evaluations will be performed within their own career program channels. The only exception will be the performance evaluation of the senior contracting official in the organization, such as the head of the contracting office. Such a performance evaluation process is not inconsistent with providing support to program managers and others in the requiring community. It should be routine practice to seek input from program managers when evaluating contracting personnel.

JOHN M. DEUTCH

CB
G-75

Enclosure 1



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
ACQUISITION LOGISTICS AND TECHNOLOGY
103 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20310-0103



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MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: The Role of Contracting Personnel

The Contracting and Acquisition Career Program (CP-14) Professional Development Committee (PDC) is chartered to develop and provide recommendations on policy, procedures, and goals relating to training and development of the Contracting and Acquisition Career Program (CP-14). One of the outputs of the PDC is a reassessment of the role of contracting and an action-oriented description of the contracting professional (enclosure).

This evolving role for contracting is founded on the success of our acquisition reform efforts, rapid advances in information technology, and the higher educational standards imposed by the recently amended Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). It is especially timely in light of Army Transformation and emerging organizational constructs.

This redefinition of the contracting professional clearly establishes mission accomplishment and customer satisfaction as key goals of the contracting organization. I expect these goals to guide strategic and performance planning within Army contracting activities and to serve as a barometer of the overall effectiveness of contracting organizations.

The contracting organization must be a strategic partner with its customers throughout the acquisition life cycle and bring business advice and solutions to bear on acquisition problems. Fulfilling this role requires a significant knowledge of business operations and commercial practices and a partnership with suppliers to the mutual benefit of the parties. I expect these requirements to guide the educational and experiential qualifications of our contracting workforce and to better focus our recruiting efforts and our training and developmental programs.

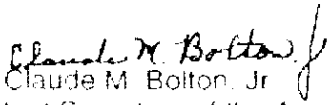
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Enclosure 2

The point of contact for this action is Tom Colangelo, DSN 655-1243, commercial (703) 805-1243, or e-mail: thomas.w.colangelo@us.army.mil


Claude M. Bolton, Jr.
Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Acquisition, Logistics and Technology)

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Contracting Business Manager/Advisor

Acquisition is the process by which the Army determines needs, conducts research necessary to define alternative solutions, develops and tests those solutions, selects the best solution, and finally produces the materiel that is used to equip our military forces. Contracting, or procurement as it is often called, is a major function of the Army acquisition process. Contracting bridges the gap between Army requirements (the soldier and combat and materiel developers) and the supplier of materiel or services to satisfy those requirements.

Contracting business managers of the new millennium are recognized as professionals with broad acquisition knowledge, outstanding business and management acumen, and demonstrated expertise in developing and applying effective business solutions to accomplish the spectrum of acquisition missions. This new breed is mission focused, customer oriented and forward thinking. They are innovative and proactive "doers" who eschew the limitations of stovepipe processes and think and act in terms of "mission accomplishment" and "product or service fulfillment".

Contracting business managers understand their customers' missions and business processes, providing them with effective business solutions to accomplish missions and achieve goals and objectives. They are full partners in the totality of acquisition life cycle management, advising and assisting customers to effectively plan and project needs, define requirements, and develop sound acquisition strategies and advocacy approaches that support prudent decision-making. They also advise in the development of requirements documentation that will support the negotiation of best value business arrangements meeting the goals of both customer and supplier.

In addition, contracting business managers partner with suppliers to better understand their products and processes and the dynamics of their business sector and overall market. They are cognizant of current and projected economic conditions and defense requirements and the impact of each on industry. They are knowledgeable of their suppliers' operating cycles and the key drivers of investment and internal operations decision-making, using this knowledge to manage risk and develop and negotiate mutually beneficial business arrangements.

Contracting professionals strive to continuously enhance their awareness, knowledge, competencies, and capabilities through learning and experience. They use, capture, and share knowledge to the overall benefit of their organization and the Army. They are invaluable members of the professional acquisition team that ensures American soldiers receive the right equipment and support, at the right time, to ensure they can perform and accomplish their missions.